

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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TAGS: MARR, KS, US
SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL CONSULTATIONS - PRESS TREATMENT

REF: (A) SEOUL 4476, (B) SEOUL 4494

SUMMARY: KOREAN PRESS MAY 28 CONTINUES HEAVY COVERAGE OF HABIB/BROWN CONSULTATIONS AND RELATED STORIES. LATTER INCLUDE MEETING OF PRESIDENT PAK WITH NDP LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG, AND REPORTS OF WASHINGTON DEVELOPMENTS. GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE STRESSING COMPENSATORY MEASURES BUT EDITORIALS IN SOME PAPERS STRESS CONTINUING HOPES FOR FURTHER REVIEW OF U.S. DECISION. OFFICIAL ROKG STATEMENT TAKES ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARK THAT PRESIDENT PAK SOUGHT TROOP WITHDRAWAL. END SUMMARY.

1. ENGLISH AND VERNACULAR PRESS GIVE FULL COVERAGE OF HABIB-BROWN DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE (REF (A), STRESSING U.S. COMMITMENT TO COMPENSATORY MEASURES. PAPERS CARRIED EITHER FULL TEXT OR EXTENSIVE SUMMARY OF Q&A.

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KOREAN TIMES REPORTS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ROKG AND U.S. OFFICIALS ON TIMING OF MEASURES--IN ADVANCE OF OR PARALLEL TO WITHDRAWAL. STORY ALSO CLAIMS ROKG SOUGHT RETENTION OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND CONCLUDES THAT WHILE ROKG SEEKS LONG CONSULTATIONS U.S. WILL PROBABLY PROCEED WITH WITHDRAWAL WHEN IT CONCLUDES DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT.

2. PRESS CARRIES STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, TAKING ISSUE WITH REMARKS BY PRESIDENT CARTER IN PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 26, INDICATING PRESIDENT PAK HAD REQUESTED TROOP WITHDRAWAL. SPOKESMAN QUOTED AS SAYING, "PRESIDENT PAK NEVER CALLED FOR THE REMOVAL OF AMERICAN GROUND FORCES.. ...NOR DID ANY OTHER SOUTH KOREAN LEADERS. WE BELIEVE MR. HABIB AND GENERAL BROWN FULLY UNDERSTOOD THIS DURING CONSULTATIONS IN SEOUL." SPOKESMAN ADDED: "WE WILL BE CONSIDERING THE PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES HAD MADE A POLITICAL DECISION TO CARRY IT OUT. HOWEVER, WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT MERITS IT HAS AND WHY IT HAS TO BE DONE SINCE TENSION AND THE DANGER OF WAR STILL EXIST ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, AND THE COMMUNISTS ARE SHOWING NO SIGNS THEY WILL MOVE TO EASE THE TENSION."

3. OTHER FRONT PAGE STORIES NOTE OPPOSITION IN U.S. SENATE TO TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND REPORT THAT JCS WAS NOT FORMALLY CONSULTED ON DECISION. PRESS ALSO REPORTS GENERAL SINGLAUB'S SCHEDULED TEMPORARY RETURN AND REASSIGNMENT. CHOSON ILBO ALSO REPORTS CBS PROGRAM GIVING DETAILS ON MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN NORTH AND SOUTH, WHICH IS ONE OF FEW TIMES KOREAN PRESS HAS CARRIED SPECIFIC FIGURES ON TANKS, AIRCRAFT, VESSELS IN HANDS OF BOTH SIDES.

4. PRINCIPAL EDITORIAL COMMENT SO FAR IN WAKE OF VISIT IS IN HANKUK ILBO AND SISTER ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAPER KOREA TIMES. THEY DO NOT COMMENT ON VISIT DIRECTLY, BUT BOTH ARE STRONGLY CRITICAL OF WITHDRAWAL DECISION. TIMES, UNDER TITLE "RASH MOVE" SAYS, "PRESIDENT CARTER WAS NOT HONEST AS A GREAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATESMAN WHEN HE TRIED TO CONVINCE THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY'S VAGUE HOPES FOR THE ADVENT OF PEACE..." CONCLUDES WITH HPE THAT "SINGLAUB SHOCK" WILL CAUSE REEXAMINATION OF WITHDRAWAL DECISION. HANKUK ILBO SOMEWHAT Milder IN TONE, AVOIDING DIRECT ATTACK ON PRESIDENT, BUT ALSO STRESSES DISSATISFACTION FOR RATIONALE FOR WITHDRAWAL. OFFICIAL KOREA HERALD, AND CHOSON ILBO, WHICH NORMALLY ADHERES TO GOVERNMENT VIEWS, DID NOT EDITORIALIZE IN SUBJECT, AND CI CARRIES SIGNED ARTICLE STRESSING SIMILARITIES OF VIEWS AND COMPENSATORY MEASURES AND BENEFIT TO ROK FROM ACCEPTING WITHDRAWAL RATHER THAN OPPOSING IT DOGGEDLY AS IN 1971 WHEN OTHER U.S. DIVISION REMOVED.

5. OTHER MAJOR STORY OF DAY WAS PRESIDENT PAK'S MEETING WITH NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG, AT WHICH PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS WITH UNDERSECRETARY HABIB AND GENERAL BROWN, AND THE TWO MEN AGREED ON "NECESSITY OF PAN-NATIONAL UNITY CONCERNING PENDING INTERNATIONAL ISSUES," AND "COMMON EFFORTS FOR

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT." FURTHER PRESIDENTIAL MEETINGS
SCHEDULED WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS TO CONTINUE EXPLANATION PROCESS.
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Sent Date: 28-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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